



STAGERAGE

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Board Update

We can advise that the ACT THREE PRODUCTIONS Board recently accepted with regret the resignation of Kerrie Simonsen. The Board therefore currently comprises Allan Nagy (President), Samantha Peters, Jessie Feyen, Kieran Peters, Jon Samia, Leanora Potten (Youth Representative), Adie Johansen and Lorna Stanley. The Administrator is Jen Lambert and the Board Secretary is Kay Nagy.



Follow Up Open Forum

You are invited to attend a follow up **Open Forum** with the ACT THREE PRODUCTIONS Board

Monday, 12 August 2024

7.30 p.m.

75 The Square, Palmerston North

This follow up forum is a further opportunity for you to ask questions of and share thoughts and experiences with the ACT THREE PRODUCTIONS Board, and to create social connections and a sense of community. This forum aims to encourage dialogue and provides a platform on which ideas, thoughts and questions can be expressed and discussed in an open environment. The Bar will be open and snacks/nibbles will be provided. If you would like to submit a written submission, please forward these to the Administrator at admin@actthree.co.nz

If you will be attending this Open Forum, please RSVP to the Administrator at admin@actthree.co.nz



Lady Whistledown's Plea

Dearest gentle readers

It appears that our cherished venue is in need of a bit of tender loving care, and who better than our esteemed members to rise to the occasion?

Yes, you heard correctly. On the third and fourth days of August, from 9.00 a.m. until 1.00 p.m., we shall convene for a collective effort to refresh our beloved venue with a touch of paint and the diligent installation of scotia and skirting board. These are tasks that require little skill yet a large sense of community spirit – a quality our beloved society has never lacked.

Imagine, if you will, the grandeur of our gathering space rejuvenated by our collective efforts. Picture the walls adorned with fresh coats of paint, the floors gleaming under our careful attention, and every corner restored to its deserved glory. Such a transformation will not only honour the shared history we have brought to this space but also ensure a splendid environment for all our future gatherings. Let us, therefore, come together on the appointed days, ready to complete a new chapter in the future of our society. Whether your expertise lies in wielding a paintbrush with finesse or in tackling those peculiar odd jobs that often go unnoticed, your presence and participation are invaluable.

In the true spirit of camaraderie and fellowship that defines our society, I implore each of you to mark your calendars for the 3rd and/or 4th of August. Let us not only beautify our venue but also strengthen the bonds that unite us as members of this esteemed society.

Should you not be so well-versed as I in the recent seasons of *Bridgerton*, please find below a translation of the above ...

Painting bee and small jobs to complete at 75 The Square!



All welcome!

(WiFi access available for kids to be occupied!)

9.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday, 3&4 August 2024

We would LOVE to see you there!



Yours in anticipation of a successful endeavour

Lady Whistledown





ACT THREE PRODUCTIONS

HE WHĀNAU TUATINITINI

WE NEED YOU!

MTNZ CONFERENCE 2025

We are looking for a team of people to help host the Musical Theatre NZ Annual Training and Conference Weekend in 2025. This coincides with our 125th Anniversary as a society!

This is going to be loads of fun and a great opportunity to network with theatre societies from around NZ. If you're keen to learn more - email lorna@actthree.co.nz



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Our Condolences

We take this time to send our sincere condolences to those members who have lost loved ones recently, specifically Andrea Maxwell whose father passed away on 12 July 2024. Our thoughts and love are extended to Andrea, Craig (Life Member of ACT THREE PRODUCTIONS) and their whānau.

We also pass on our condolences to Graham Johnston whose father also passed away on 12 July 2024. Ian was a past member of the Palmerston North Operatic Society/Abbey Musical Theatre and will be remembered for his fabulous portrayal of Captain Von Trapp in our 1985 production of The Sound Of Music, along with his incredible career on the radio. Our thoughts and love go to Elayne, Graham, Katte and the rest of the Johnston whanau.

After the tears have dried and the goodbyes have been said, all we have to hold onto are the happy memories that we've shared with our loved ones who have passed - this is what keeps them alive in our hearts and in our minds and they will continue to live on through us.





Tickets on sale now

<https://premier.ticketek.co.nz/shows/show.aspx?sh=KINKY24>

Cast List

SIMON/LOLA	Paul Fagamalo
CHARLIE PRICE	Lindsay Yeo
LAUREN	Tamzin Price
LAUREN ALTERNATE	Peta Lynch
NICOLA	Milana Mariu-Reade
DON	Jayden Colban
PAT	Jo Sale
TRISH	Erica Ward
GEORGE	Steve Jenkins
HARRY	Kieran Murphy
MR PRICE	Stephen Paul Gregory
YOUNG SIMON	Manawa Te Wiki / Charleigh Skelton-Morris
YOUNG CHARLIE	Jackson Kingston / Oscar James

Angels

Alex Dinniss, Cam Baker, Clio Exconde, Finn Davidson, Hannah Newman, Matthew Lyne

Ensemble

Dalton Watson, Hawi Pere, Katie Clark, Katte Johnston, Lorna Stanley, Lottie Perry, Peta Lynch, Shawanda Scanlon-Parker

Backing Vocalists

Emilia Vibart, Ngamarama Tuariki, Danielle Macdonald, William Lyne

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2024 Tony Awards Nominees and Winners

by Shelby Stivale



Brody Grant, Rachel McAdams, Daniel Radcliffe [Getty Images(3)]

Broadway's best stepped out for the 2024 Tony Awards on 16 June 2024. Nominations were announced in April with *HELL'S KITCHEN* coming out on top with the most nods. The musical, featuring music and lyrics by Alicia Keys, was recognised across 13 categories, including Best Musical, Best Direction of a Musical and Best Choreography. Cast members, like Maleah Joi Moon in the Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Musical category, received nods in various categories, celebrating their respective performances. *Stereophonic* also received 13 Tony nominations this year, including Best Play, Best Performance by a Featured Actor in a Play (for three stars, Will Brill, Eli Gelb and Tom Pecinka) and Best Direction of a Play. *THE OUTSIDERS* came in behind them with 12 nods. The Angelina Jolie-produced musical stars newcomer Brody Grant as Ponyboy Curtis, who was nominated in the Best Performance by a Leading Actor in a Musical category. "Now that all the dust is settled, I wanna say that it really really is an honor for *THE OUTSIDERS* to be included in this year's nominations," Grant wrote on Instagram. "I'm proud to have been a part of *THE OUTSIDERS* company for a couple years now. It really has been a journey!" Of course, the star-studded *Merrily We Roll Along* musical was recognised as well with seven nominations. Jonathan Groff was up for Best Performance by a Leading Actor in a Musical for his role as Franklin Shephard, Daniel Radcliffe was nominated for Best Performance by a Featured Actor in a Musical for playing Charley Kringas and Lindsay Mendez, who played Mary Flynn, is up for Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Musical.

Scroll down for a list of the 2024 Tony nominations — and look for the bold names to see who won:

Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Play

- **WINNER: Sarah Paulson, *Appropriate***
- Betsy Aidem, *Prayer for the French Republic*
- Jessica Lange, *Mother Play*
- Rachel McAdams, *Mary Jane*
- Amy Ryan, *Doubt: A Parable*

Best Revival of a Musical

- **WINNER: *Merrily We Roll Along***
- *Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club*
- *Gutenberg! The Musical!*
- *The Who's TOMMY*

Best Play

- **WINNER: *Stereophonic***
- *Jaja's African Hair Braiding*
- *Mary Jane*
- *Mother Play*
- *Prayer for the French Republic*

Best Revival of a Play

- **WINNER: *Appropriate***
- *An Enemy of the People*
- *Purlie Victorious: A Non-Confederate Romp Through the Cotton Patch*

Best Original Score

- **WINNER: *Shaina Taub, Suffs***
- Adam Guettel, *Days of Wine and Roses*
- David Byrne and Fatboy Slim, *Here Lies Love*
- Will Butler, *Stereophonic*
- Jamestown Revival and Justin Levine, *THE OUTSIDERS*

Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Musical

- **WINNER: *Kecia Lewis, HELL'S KITCHEN***
- Shoshana Bean, *HELL'S KITCHEN*
- Amber Iman, *Lempicka*
- Nikki M. James, *Suffs*
- Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer, *Monty Python's Spamalot*
- Lindsay Mendez, *Merrily We Roll Along*
- Bebe Neuwirth, *Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club*

Best Performance by a Featured Actor in a Musical

- **WINNER: *Daniel Radcliffe, Merrily We Roll Along***
- Roger Bart, *Back To The Future: The Musical*
- Joshua Boone, *THE OUTSIDERS*
- Brandon Victor Dixon, *HELL'S KITCHEN*
- Sky Lakota-Lynch, *THE OUTSIDERS*
- Steven Skybell, *Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club*

Best Direction of a Musical

- **WINNER: *Danya Taymor, THE OUTSIDERS***
- Maria Friedman, *Merrily We Roll Along*
- Michael Greif, *HELL'S KITCHEN*
- Leigh Silverman, *Suffs*
- Jessica Stone, *Water for Elephants*

Best Direction of a Play

- **WINNER: Daniel Aukin, *Stereophonic***
- Anne Kauffman, *Mary Jane*
- Kenny Leon, *Purlie Victorious: A Non-Confederate Romp Through the Cotton Patch*
- Lila Neugebauer, *Appropriate*
- Whitney White, *Jaja's African Hair Braiding*

Best Performance by a Leading Actor in a Play

- **WINNER: Jeremy Strong, *An Enemy of the People***
- William Jackson Harper, *Uncle Vanya*
- Leslie Odom, Jr., *Purlie Victorious: A Non-Confederate Romp Through the Cotton Patch*
- Liev Schreiber, *Doubt: A Parable*
- Michael Stuhlbarg, *Patriots*

Best Sound Design of a Musical

- **WINNER: Cody Spencer, *THE OUTSIDERS***
- M.L. Dogg and Cody Spencer, *Here Lies Love*
- Kai Harada, *Merrily We Roll Along*
- Nick Lidster for Autograph, *Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club*
- Gareth Owen, *HELL'S KITCHEN*

Best Sound Design of a Play

- **WINNER: Ryan Rumery, *Stereophonic***
- Justin Ellington and Stefania Bulbarella, *Jaja's African Hair Braiding*
- Leah Gelpe, *Mary Jane*
- Tom Gibbons, *Grey House*
- Bray Poor and Will Pickens, *Appropriate*

Best Lighting Design of a Play

- **WINNER: Jane Cox, *Appropriate***
- Isabella Byrd, *An Enemy of the People*
- Amith Chandrashaker, *Prayer for the French Republic*
- Jiyoun Chang, *Stereophonic*
- Natasha Katz, *Grey House*

Best Lighting Design of a Musical

- **WINNER: Brian MacDevitt and Hana S. Kim, *THE OUTSIDERS***
- Brandon Stirling Baker, *Illinoise*
- Isabella Byrd, *Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club*
- Natasha Katz, *HELL'S KITCHEN*
- Bradley King and David Bengali, *Water for Elephants*

Best Scenic Design in a Play

- **WINNER: David Zinn, *Stereophonic***
- dots, *Appropriate*
- dots, *Enemy of the People*
- Derek McLane, *Purlie Victorious: A Non-Confederate Romp Through the Cotton Patch*
- David Zinn, *Jaja's African Hair Braiding*

Best Choreography

- **WINNER: Justin Peck, *Illinoise***
- Annie-B Parson, *Here Lies Love*
- Camille A. Brown, *HELL'S KITCHEN*
- Rick Kuperman and Jeff Kuperman, *THE OUTSIDERS*
- Jesse Robb and Shana Carroll, *Water for Elephants*

Best Scenic Design of a Musical

- **WINNER: Tom Scutt, *Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club***
- AMP featuring Tatiana Kahvegian, *THE OUTSIDERS*
- Robert Brill and Peter Nigrini, *HELL'S KITCHEN*
- Takeshi Kata, *Water for Elephants*
- David Korins, *Here Lies Love*
- Riccardo Hernández and Peter Nigrini, *Lempicka*
- Tim Hatley and Finn Ross, *Back To The Future: The Musical*

Best Orchestrations

- **WINNER: Jonathan Tunick, *Merrily We Roll Along***
- Timo Andres, *Illinoise*
- Will Butler and Justin Craig, *Stereophonic*
- Justin Levine, Matt Hinkley and Jamestown Revival (Jonathan Clay and Zach Chance), *THE OUTSIDERS*
- Tom Kitt and Adam Blackstone, *HELL'S KITCHEN*

Best Costume Design of a Musical

- **WINNER: Linda Cho, *The Great Gatsby***
- Dede Ayite, *HELL'S KITCHEN*
- David Israel Reynoso, *Water for Elephants*
- Tom Scutt, *Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club*
- Paul Tazewell, *Suffs*

Best Costume Design of a Play

- **WINNER: Dede Ayite, *Jaja's African Hair Braiding***
- Dede Ayite, *Appropriate*
- Enver Chakartash, *Stereophonic*
- Emilio Sosa, *Purlie Victorious: A Non-Confederate Romp Through the Cotton Patch*
- David Zinn, *An Enemy of the People*

Best Book of a Musical

- **WINNER: Shaina Taub, *Suffs***
- Kristoffer Diaz, *HELL'S KITCHEN*
- Bekah Brunstetter, *The Notebook*
- Adam Rapp and Justine Levine, *THE OUTSIDERS*
- Rick Elice, *Water for Elephants*

Best Musical

- *HELL'S KITCHEN*
- *Illinoise*
- ***THE OUTSIDERS***
- *Suffs*
- *Water for Elephants*

Best Performance by a Leading Actor in a Musical

- Brody Grant, *THE OUTSIDERS*
- **Jonathan Groff, *Merrily We Roll Along***
- Dorian Harewood, *The Notebook*
- Brian d'Arcy James, *Days of Wine and Roses*
- Eddie Redmayne, *Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club*

Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Musical

- Edin Espinosa, *Lempicka*
- **Maleah Joi Moon, *HELL'S KITCHEN***
- Kelli O'Hara, *Days of Wine and Roses*
- Maryann Plunkett, *The Notebook*
- Gayle Rankin, *Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club*



Maleah Joi Moon made her Broadway debut this year as the teenager at the heart of the Alicia Keys musical *HELL'S KITCHEN*. On Sunday night, she won the Tony Award for best leading actress in a musical. (Credit: Sara Krulwich/The New York Times)



A teary Jonathan Groff took home a Tony at last, earning best leading actor in a musical honours for *Merrily We Roll Along*. (Credit: Sara Krulwich/The New York Times)



Daniel Radcliffe won his first Tony, which honoured his work as a featured actor in the revival of Stephen Sondheim's *Merrily We Roll Along*. (Credit: Sara Krulwich/The New York Times)



Merrily We Roll Along won the Tony for best musical revival. Sondheim's original 1981 production, long considered a flop, closed just 12 days after opening. (Credit: Sara Krulwich/The New York Times)



THE OUTSIDERS won best new musical. As The New York Times's chief theatre critic, Jesse Green, put it, Tony voters went with "the underdog show about perennial underdogs." (Credit: Sara Krulwich/The New York Times)



In a reflective speech accepting the Isabelle Stevenson Award, Billy Porter told the Tonys audience, "I grew up in a world where they told me that who I was was not worthy of anything. So the fact that I'm standing before you is a miracle." (Credit: Sara Krulwich/The New York Times)

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THE LAST FIVE YEARS to make long-awaited Broadway premiere; Adrienne Warren and Nick Jonas will star

by Andy Lefkowitz



Adrienne Warren and Nick Jonas (Credit: Norman Jean Roy)

More than two decades after its stage debut, Jason Robert Brown's musical *THE LAST FIVE YEARS* will arrive on the Main Stem for the first time in spring 2025. Tony Award nominee Whitney White will direct the two-hander, which will star Tony winner Adrienne Warren and Grammy Award nominee Nick Jonas. *THE LAST FIVE YEARS* follows the relationship of Cathy (Warren) and Jamie (Jonas) over the course of five years, told by Cathy starting with the end of their partnership and by Jamie from the beginning. *THE LAST FIVE YEARS* premiered in a production in Skokie, Illinois, in 2001, which followed an Off-Broadway premiere in 2002. The musical received an Off-Broadway revival in 2013 and a film adaptation in 2014. Warren won a Tony for her turn as the title role in *TINA: The Tina Turner Musical*, a performance she originated in London's West End, earning an Olivier Award nomination. Her other Broadway credits include a Tony-nominated turn as Florence Mills in *Shuffle Along* and a performance as Danielle in *BRING IT ON*. Also on the New York stage, Warren was seen in *THE WIZ* at City Center and *DREAMGIRLS* at the Apollo. Jonas is most known for a music partnership with his brothers, Joe Jonas and Kevin Jonas. The Jonas Brothers have jointly earned two Grammy nominations for their efforts. Nick Jonas is also a Broadway alum, having replaced as Gavroche in *Les Misérables*, Little Jake in *Annie Get Your Gun* and J. Pierrepont Finch in *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*.

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IDINA MENZEL WILL RETURN TO BROADWAY IN NEW MUSICAL REDWOOD

by Andy Lefkowitz

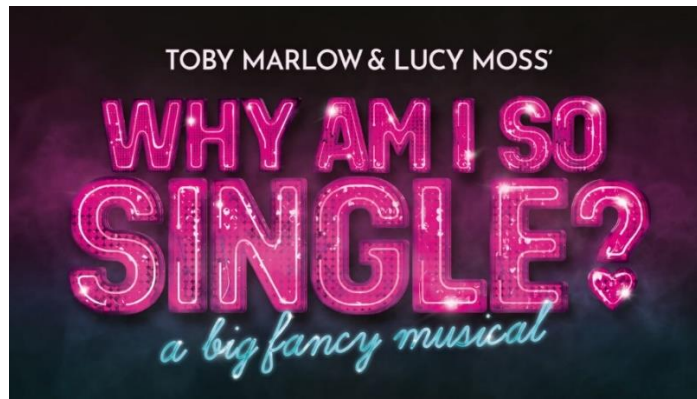
The musical recently debuted at San Diego's La Jolla Playhouse.



Idina Menzel in "Redwood" at La Jolla Playhouse, 2024 (Credit: Emma Anderson)

Idina Menzel is headed back to Broadway. The Tony Award winner known for *WICKED* and the *FROZEN* films will headline the new musical *Redwood* on the Main Stem in spring 2025. Tony nominee Tina Landau will direct the musical, which will be produced by Eva Price, Caroline Kaplan and Loudmouth Media. "I'm so thrilled to be returning to Broadway, and the fact that I get to do it with *Redwood*, a musical that means so much to me, makes it even more special," said Menzel in a statement. "This show has lived in my bones for 15 years, from the very first time Tina and I discussed working together. Finally getting to do it on Broadway is really a dream come true." Conceived by Landau and Menzel, with a book by Kate Diaz and Landau, music by Diaz and lyrics by Diaz and Landau, *Redwood* follows Jesse (Menzel), a successful businesswoman, mother and wife who seems to have it all, but finds herself at a turning point. Jesse decides to leave everyone and everything behind, get in her car and drive. Thousands of miles later, she hits the majestic forests of Northern California, where a chance meeting changes her life forever. Menzel won a 2004 Tony Award for her leading turn as Elphaba in *WICKED*. She was previously nominated in 1996 for a featured performance as Maureen in *RENT* and later in 2014 for starring as Elizabeth in *If/Then*. Menzel voiced the role of Elsa in the 2013 animated film *FROZEN*, popularizing the Oscar-winning song "Let It Go," and again voiced the role in sequels. This summer, Menzel will launch a North American concert tour, which will feature some songs from *Redwood*. Landau, who is currently represented on Broadway as director of Paula Vogel's Tony-nominated *Mother Play*, will also helm the Broadway premiere of her and Adam Guettel's musical *Floyd Collins* in spring 2025. In 2018, Landau was Tony-nominated and won a Drama Desk Award for directing the musical *SpongeBob SquarePants*. Diaz, a newcomer to musical theater, has written songs and scores for film and TV, as well as trailers and commercials. She orchestrates, arranges and produces for herself and others, and is also a session vocalist and guitarist. In addition to her duties as composer and co-lyricist of *Redwood*, she is the musical's arranger and orchestrator. *Redwood* was originally developed and produced by San Diego's La Jolla Playhouse, which concluded its limited-run premiere in spring 2024. Additional creative team and cast members as well as dates and a Broadway venue for *Redwood* will be announced.

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Imagine being soooo cool, interesting, and fun – and yet, somehow, finding yourself perpetually single...!? That’s the extraordinary and unique situation faced by two best pals in *WHY AM I SO SINGLE?*

Oh, and on a completely unrelated note, they also happen to be musical theatre writers looking for an important subject matter to make their next show about.

From the writers of *SIX*, Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss, comes *WHY AM I SO SINGLE?* – a big fancy musical where two friends’ lonely little lives are transformed into an all-singing, all-dancing extravaganza about love, dating, friendship, and ... bees.

Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss are ‘the future of musical theatre’ according to *Vogue*. Plus, *TIME* 100 says they’ve ‘broken barriers in theatre’.



Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss

The new musical follows two perpetually single friends in the age of Tinder ... and Bumble, and Grindr, and Hinge. *WHY AM I SO SINGLE?* premieres on the West End, playing the Garrick Theatre, on 27 August. Moss will direct. The run is currently scheduled to continue through 13 February 2025. With pop and musical-inspired songs, the show follows two perpetually single friends who can’t figure out why they’re so single or what to write their next musical about. “This is ultimately a musical about two friends, their desire for love and how they deal with loneliness,” say Marlow and Moss in a joint statement. “We hope people come away feeling super uplifted. And we hope they text someone the second they leave the theatre saying ‘omigosh just fyi I love you soooo much!!!!’”

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From ABBA to Katy Perry: Does Pop Belong on Broadway?

by Mychele Lebrun

Ah, the jukebox musical ... where to begin!? For years, theatre fans everywhere have argued its place on the Broadway stage. A now popular format, the jukebox musical uses already existing pop music at its core, to weave together a new story on stage. Though *The Beggar's Opera* in 1728 is said to be the first of its kind, the genre really only found its momentum after *MAMMA MIA!* turned ABBA's music into staged gold. Since then, pop has continued to dominate, though to various degrees of success. Critics seem unwilling to praise the era, but fans keep buying tickets all the same. So, we must ask ourselves, is it time to move on from the popular genre or is there still a space to tell these stories?

Let's be honest, jukebox musicals are a lot of fun! The music is very accessible and opens the musical theatre world to those who might not normally spend time at the theatre. *WE WILL ROCK YOU*, for example, saw Queen fans immersing themselves into our world to hear new versions of songs they already loved. *American Idiot* did similarly with Green Day fans. Producing big shows with popular music reminds the average joe that theatre is still alive and well, and worth a trip. More so, popular shows can become tourist attractions in their own right, drawing visitors to theatre districts and contributing to local economies, especially in smaller towns. Productions like *MAMMA MIA!* and *ROCK OF AGES* have become cultural phenomena, generating revenue for theatres, restaurants, and other businesses. This is why so many jukebox musicals end up touring the United Kingdom and the United States. As an easy and accessible night at the theatre, they do very well in smaller cities that don't always have access to big scale musicals.



The company of *& Juliet* (Photo by Matthew Murphy)

However, those same fans can be quite protective of the music they love. Critics and theatre goers alike often find fault in new jukebox scores because they are too attached to the versions they already know. Although *Jagged Little Pill* was well received with 15 Tony Award nominations, some Alanis Morissette fans found the new tracks lacked the edginess she is best known for. It appears fans expect the new musical to feel more like a tribute concert. They seem disappointed to find out that, not only is their favourite performer not on stage, but the music will also have morphed to better suit the format of a musical.

And these changes are inevitable. Musical songs are meant to move the plot along. When a character feels too overwhelmed to speak, they sing. This is a key component to the musical structure. However, most pop music has not been written to prioritise storytelling.

The lack of emotional depth can hinder character development and give actors little to work with on stage. When this happens, we are left with two-dimensional characters who must rely on entertainment value to keep audiences entertained. While pop music is catchy and accessible, the lack of storytelling it provides can really hinder the overall arc and themes of a show. After all, weaving together a story through a limited catalogue of pop songs is no easy feat. Though some, like *Moulin Rouge!* or *Juliet* have successfully done so, musicals of this style often end up the result of great music, weaved together by a weak and disjointed book. It's no wonder so many find themselves being criticised as fluffy, entertaining, and fun, but not much more. *Escape to Margaritaville*, I'm looking at you.

In recent years, the West End has been inundated with jukebox musicals; *MAMMA MIA!*, *MJ the Musical*, *Moulin Rouge!*, *JERSEY BOYS*, *Standing at the Sky's Edge*, *The Choir of Man*, *TINA*, *Ain't Too Proud* etc. These are only some of the jukebox shows currently or recently playing here in London. But with so many running at one time, is there enough space for original musicals to thrive as well? Some critics argue that with limited theatre space comes limited success, and this influx of already popular music is hindering the new musical's chance of survival. When the average citizen decides to spend their well-earned money at the theatre, are they more inclined to spend on a show that has music they already love, or will they take a chance on a new score, which they know nothing about? What happens to the poor artists who are creating everything from scratch but can't compete with the musicals that already have a huge following? It might be time to prioritise those composers who are braving the creative world all on their own.



Myles Frost as Michael Jackson in *MJ the Musical* (photo by Matthew Murphy)

Though we can harp on the negatives, the truth of the matter is; jukebox musicals sell. And some have done really well. In fact, some are great because they are also biographical. Many productions, like *TINA*, *BEAUTIFUL: The Carole King Musical* and *JERSEY BOYS* work because the music is used to tell the story of those who first performed it. This not only educates audience members in a famous artist's life, but also keeps their music in the right world. Suddenly, it makes sense. The pop score has a reason for being there, and allows the story to always move forward, as the main character writes, performs, or records their songs in the context of the show. As an homage to the original artists, biographical jukebox musicals can be educational, fun, and inspiring if done the right way.

And so, I ask my initial question again. Is there still space in the industry for the jukebox musical? While they come with their fair share of challenges, the genre does continue to captivate audiences and inspire creativity in the world of musical theatre.

They offer a unique blend of nostalgia, entertainment, and cultural significance. But it's all about balance. It is as important to honour the amazing music that has come before us as it is to celebrate new creative work as it grows and develops. As long as audiences are willing to buy tickets to both, I'm sure we can find a place on the stage for both the fun and the serious, the new and the old!



Mychele Lebrun

Mychele is a Canadian musical theatre artist currently based in London, England. Some of her recent credits include the Thursford Christmas Spectacular (2022) as well as *Big Band Beat*, *Aladdin* and *Frozen* with Disney Entertainment. @mychelelebrun

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